



May 4, 2005

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- **National Women's Health Week**

A Call to Action: Ensuring Medicare Beneficiaries Make Informed Decisions about the New Drug Benefit

Older Americans Month is celebrated each May to recognize older persons for the important roles they play in their families, communities, and workplaces. The 2005 Older Americans Month theme, "Celebrate Long-Term Living," recognizes not only that Americans are living longer, healthier lives than ever before, but that the majority of older Americans are living in their homes and remaining active in their communities far into their later years.

As we celebrate Older Americans Month, I want to thank you for your efforts last year during the early implementation of the transitional assistance under the Medicare Prescription Discount Drug Card. You were an instrumental partner with us to help low-income Medicare beneficiaries access new benefits that will save them money. Together, we reached over 20 million beneficiaries and their caregivers, including many who are the most difficult to reach – low-income, minority, and rural beneficiaries.

The time has come again for trusted community aging service organizations such as yours to assist Medicare beneficiaries with information and assistance. Over the next year, HHS will continue its implementation of the most important provision of the Medicare Modernization Act: the new drug benefit that goes into effect January 1, 2006. Our missions provide us a historic opportunity to work again to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries can make informed decisions about their health care coverage. For this reason, AoA is reaching out to all elderly individuals to ensure that they can take full advantage of the new benefits that Medicare will provide to them. We want to partner with you to make access to these new benefits possible for as many older Americans as possible.

To help you as you help seniors, AoA has developed a special website, www.aoa.gov/medicare, that will provide you with up to date information and resources. Please join us in this partnership by registering online. You can sign up for any or all of the following:

- Information - *receive updates and information from AoA and CMS on an on-going basis*
- Dissemination – *share important new benefit information and provide materials to Medicare beneficiaries and their families*
- Event Coordination – *provide AoA with listings of upcoming events in your area as well as host events and enrollment workshops for Medicare beneficiaries and their families*
- Enrollment – *provide personalized counseling and enrollment services for Medicare beneficiaries on the Limited-Income Subsidy and on the Part D drug coverage*

This is about helping the people we serve. We value your partnership and your commitment to providing older Americans with the quality of life they so deserve. I look forward to working with you again in the implementation of this very important benefit for our elders.

Josefina G. Carbonell

National Women's Health Week

The Monday following Mother's Day, National Women's Check-Up Day, is the perfect opportunity to encourage moms, aunts, sisters, spouses, and best friends to visit a health care professional to receive preventive services and screenings. Since many of the leading causes of death among women can be successfully prevented or treated if the warning signs are caught early enough, a reminder from loved ones to get a regular health checkup is one of the nicest gifts a woman can receive. To participate in National Women's Check-Up Day, women should schedule appointments with their existing health care providers or contact one of the participating local community health centers, hospitals and other health care providers to schedule checkups and screening services. For information about how to participate in National Women's Check-Up Day, women and health care providers or organizations can visit the National Women's Health Information Center at www.4woman.gov/whw or call 1-800-994-WOMAN (9662), or TDD: (888) 220-5446.

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AoA News

Livable Communities Competition

AoA and the Center for Home Care Policy and Research are pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the Models of Livable Communities Competition. The purpose of this competition is to identify and showcase cities and counties that exemplify a livable community and to highlight promising practices that can be used by local governments throughout the country in preparing for the aging of the baby boom population. Through the development and national dissemination of case studies that highlight leading practices, AoA aims to inspire other communities to also become Livable Communities for All Ages, including older adults. Applications are due on May 2, 2005. For competition guidelines and the entry form go to: <http://www.vnsny.org/research/aoacompetition>

Upcoming National Home and Community Based Services Waiver Conference

The National Home and Community Based Services Waiver Conference is the only national conference designed to meet the unique training needs of the professionals who administer and operate the HCBS Waiver programs around the country. The National Association of State Units on Aging is pleased to have the Florida Department of Elder Affairs host the 2005 HCBS Waiver Conference in Orlando, Florida May 15-18. HCBS Waivers offer alternatives to institutional care to persons of all ages with disabilities or chronic conditions. Absent a national long term care system, states rely heavily on Medicaid Waivers as the backbone of their diverse systems of community support. Like its predecessors, the 21st National HCBS Waiver Conference will offer substantive opportunities to learn about the national initiatives, policy directions and grant programs that shape the current environment. The Florida Department of Elder Affairs is teaming up with a dynamic local planning team-the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, Florida Department of Health, the Florida Department of Children and Families and the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities-to showcase one of the most dynamic statewide HCBS

Waiver systems in the country. Conference participants will have an opportunity to learn about Florida's Cash and Counseling Program and a wide range of unique approaches to home and community based services waivers from around the country in more than 70 workshops, symposia and open forums. Poster sessions and roundtable discussions will provide exciting opportunities to network and explore in detail new research, programs and methods for providing home and community based services. Join administrators, policymakers, providers, researchers, educators and direct service staff of government, nonprofit, healthcare, long term care and other services organizations. You'll engage with advocates and consumers involved in or concerned about the administration, management, and service delivery of all types of waiver programs, including aged, disability, developmental disability, mental health, traumatic brain injury, HIV/AIDS, and medically fragile waivers. For registration information visit:

https://www.letsmeet.net/forms/nasua_reg/nasuareg1.htm or for

exhibitor/sponsorship/advertising information go to:

http://www.nasua.org/waiverconference/wc_exhibitor_sponsor_info.htm. For the preliminary schedule visit:

http://www.nasua.org/waiverconference/wc_prelim_schedule.htm or for the Ma 15 pre-conference intensive go to:

http://www.nasua.org/waiverconference/preconf_intensives.htm.

NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging Launches Online Resources

NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging, funded in part by AoA, has launched a new Web site. The site is designed to provide aging-service providers who are interested in healthy aging with easy access to resources, such as manuals, assessment tools, toolkits, model programs, and links to Web sites; and topics related to healthy aging, including health promotion, disease prevention, falls prevention, and chronic disease self-management. The CHA, directed by Dr. Nancy Whitelaw, serves as a National Resource Center for the AoA initiative "Evidence-based Prevention Program for the Elderly." The Institute on Aging at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill partnered with CHA to develop and test this Web site. For more information visit:

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.org>.

***You Can!* Campaign Update**

AoA has met its objective of enrolling 2000 partners in the *You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging* campaign by 2006. The *You Can!* campaign aims to boost physical activity and improve food choices among older Americans. AoA will be working with its partners to reach two million adults by 2006. During March, approximately 200 *You Can!* partners participated in the *You Can!* Webinar entitled "Low Cost Ways to Raise Your Profile in the Community." AoA also announced selection of 17 *You Can!* Program Champions at the 2005 Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging and the National Council on the Aging. The 17 Program Champions are partnering organizations that exemplify what it means to offer nutrition education and physical activity programming for older adults at the community level. Champions were selected from nominations submitted by national *You Can!* partners and AoA program experts. AoA announced the *You Can!* Program Champion initiative in March to celebrate National Nutrition Month®, that is sponsored each year by the American Dietetic Association. ADA is a *You Can!* partner and participated in the review of nominations for *You Can!* Program Champions. For more information visit:

http://www.aoa.gov/press/pr/2005/05_Mar/03_10_05.asp.

Policy and Program Updates

\$4.4 Million Available for Older Adults Mental Health Grant Program

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of HHS recently announced the availability of FY 2005 funds for the Older Adult Mental Health Targeted Capacity Expansion Grant Program to help communities provide direct services and build the necessary infrastructure to support and meet the diverse mental health needs of older persons. Direct services to be funded under this grant program must be supported by a strong evidence base. It is expected that approximately \$4.4 million will be available to fund up to 11 awards to build a solid foundation for delivering and sustaining effective mental health outreach, treatment, and prevention services, as well as resources to support the direct delivery of services to adults 60 years and older. The annual award amount will be approximately \$375,000 to \$400,000 per year for up to three years. The actual award amount may vary, depending on the availability of funds. The grants will be awarded by SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services. Eligible applicants are domestic public and private nonprofit entities such as state, local or tribal governments; public or private universities and colleges; community- and faith-based organizations; and tribal organizations may apply. Applicants must comply with the requirement to address the target population of persons 60 years of age and older who are at risk for or are experiencing mental health problems. Applications for No. SM-05-012 are available by calling SAMHSA's clearinghouse at 1-800-729-6686, or by downloading the application from www.grants.gov or from the SAMHSA web site at www.samhsa.gov. Click on "Grants". Applicants are encouraged to apply on line through a new service at www.grants.gov. Application due date is MAY 5, 2005. Applicants with questions on program issues should contact Betsy McDonel Herr, at 240-276-1911 or e-mail to betsy.mcdonelherr@samhsa.hhs.gov. For questions on grants management issues, contact Kimberly Pendleton at 276-2401421 or e-mail to kimberly.pendleton@samhsa.hhs.gov.

Impact of Lifestyle Choices, Race and Ethnicity on Health of Women

The Health Resources Services Administration has released its third annual survey of women's health, *Women's Health USA 2004*. The report highlights the impact of physical activity, diet and nutrition, overweight and obesity on women's health. It also examines racial and ethnic disparities for 56 health measures. The report is available in hard copy through the HRSA Information Center at: <http://www.ask.hrsa.gov/>. For more information go to: <http://newsroom.hrsa.gov/NewsBriefs/2004/whusa.htm>.

Making a Difference

Florida Physicians Write Prescriptions for Patient Information

The American Medical Association Foundation and the Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation have teamed up with the National Library of Medicine to encourage Florida physicians to point patients to first-rate online health information in NLM's MedlinePlus database and Fisher Center Foundation's Web site. The pilot program, called the "Information Rx" project, was launched in six Florida counties with a demonstration hosted by Rep. C. W. Bill Young (R-FL) in February. The

program aims to significantly improve health literacy and patient education by combining high quality sources of consumer health and Alzheimer's disease information with the interpersonal intervention and encouragement of a trusted medical provider. Patients will find information on symptoms, diagnosis and treatment, current news stories, research studies, clinical trials, helpful graphics and even video tutorials. There are detailed but easy-to-read information on thousands of over-the-counter and prescription drugs. MedlinePlus also is available in Spanish. The Information Rx Project is already well received by doctors and their patients elsewhere. Preliminary findings from ongoing pilot projects with Internists in Iowa, Georgia, and Virginia revealed that 97 percent of participating physicians make referrals to MedlinePlus and the overwhelming majority use it daily. Internists who participated in the pilot programs said MedlinePlus empowers patients, explains difficult concepts and procedures, and improves patient-physician communication. After testing of this pilot program, an expanded national initiative is expected to follow. For more information go to: www.medlineplus.gov or visit www.alzinfo.org. To access the news release go to: <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/feb2005/nlm-10.htm>.

NAPCA Assists Asian and Pacific Elders with Medicare Prescription Drug Discount Card Program

As we celebrate Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month in May, we are reminded of the rich diversity, history, and traditions that our Asian and Pacific Islander elders contribute to the United States. AoA is pleased to highlight the work of the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging in collaborating with more than 30 community based organizations and faith based organizations to assist elders to enroll in the transitional assistance program under the Medicare prescription drug discount card program. Over 3.5 million APIs were reached through national and local ethnic API radio, TV, daily and weekly print media. Rx discount card and transitional assistance program information and materials were distributed at outreach meetings in D.C., Houston, NY, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Orange County, Seattle, and Philadelphia as well as in response to telephone calls. NAPCA also established a multilingual toll free Helpline to answer questions from API elders regarding the Rx discount card and transitional assistance program. NAPCA will continue to provide useful, understandable and timely information concerning the Medicare Modernization Act. For more information about the NAPCA go to: <http://www.napca.org>.

Bexar Area Agency on Aging Offers Evidence-Based Programming to Hispanic Seniors

In recognition of Cinco de Mayo, AoA recognizes The Bexar Area Agency on Aging in San Antonio, Texas and key community partners for Project SIEN, or the Seniors Involved in Exercise and Nutrition project. As one of the AoA funded Evidence-Based Grant programs, Project SIEN reaches low-income Hispanic seniors participating in Title IIIC1 congregate meals program. Project SIEN is modeled after interventions identified in the successful Diabetes Prevention Project national research study. Through Project SIEN, participating Hispanic seniors receive meals that are culturally sensitive and low in fat seven days a week; health screening; 120 minutes of exercise per week, education on nutrition, diabetes, and lifestyle modification; and peer support. Encouraged by the success of Project SIEN, Bexar Area Agency on Aging is currently developing a toolkit so that the program may be easily replicated

in other communities. Other partners include: City of San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives; Texas Diabetes Institute, OASIS; Texas Diabetes Institute; and University of Texas Health Science Center. For more information about AoA evidence-based grant programs visit:

<http://www.aoa.gov/prof/evidence/evidence.asp>.

Of Interest

National Action Plan to Reduce Falls for Older Adults Released

To reduce falls and related injuries among older adults, top health and safety organizations led by the National Council on the Aging, the Archstone Foundation, and the Home Safety Council have collaborated in the *Falls Free: Promoting a National Falls Prevention Action Plan* initiative. Released March 10, 2005, the National Action Plan is a one-of-its-kind monograph that addresses the challenges of a national falls prevention initiative and outlines action steps to help reduce fall dangers for older adults. The plan outlines strategies to reduce key risk factors for falls, including physical mobility, medications management, home safety, and environmental safety in the community. It may be downloaded from the Center for Healthy Aging Web site at

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/content.asp?sectionid=9>

Experience Works Searches for America's Oldest Worker

Experience Works, the nation's largest training and employment organization for mature workers, has launched its annual search for "America's Oldest Worker." The honoree of the 2005 title will be announced during Experience Works' Prime Time Awards week in Washington, D.C. during September. Recognition of America's Oldest Worker; designation of 52 other outstanding older workers from every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico; and top employers of senior workers are all part of Experience Works' national effort to raise awareness of the contributions made by older individuals and to break down barriers associated with the hiring of older workers. In 2004, Ella Clarke Nuite, 100, owner and operator of a spring water distribution company from Hephzibah, Ga., was the first female to be honored as the America's Oldest Worker. All of the past America's Oldest Workers have been over 100 years old and working almost full time at their professions. To be considered as America's Oldest Worker, applicants must work a minimum of 20 hours a week in paid employment, and be willing to travel to Washington, D.C., in September to participate in the Prime Time Awards events. Applicants or the person nominating them must complete an application and submit it prior to the deadline of May 31st. The older worker with the earliest birth date who meets all the criteria will be honored as America's Oldest Worker. To receive a nomination form write to Prime Time Awards, Experience Works, 2200 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 1000, Arlington, VA 22201, or call toll free, 1-866-397-9757. Workers may enter themselves or be nominated by an employer, family, or friends. To access a nomination form, go to www.experienceworks.org.

New Partnership for National Senior Games

The National Senior Games Association has entered into a three-year sponsorship agreement with Wells Fargo. Well Fargo will be a Bronze Medal Sponsor of all NSGA

national events. Their particular areas of interest are reverse Mortgage Lending and Home Equity Financing. Philip H. Godfrey, Vice President, Chief Operating Officer views this agreement as the beginning of a great new partnership for NSGA. The 2005 Summer National Senior Games will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 3-18, 2005. The 2005 National Senior Games Championship Festival will be held in Mobile, Alabama, October 19-30, 2005. For more information about the National Senior Games visit: www.nationalseniorgames.org.

Free Web Course on Cross-Cultural Communication

The New York New Jersey-Public Health Training Center invites you to participate in a, free, web-based interactive learning experience: Communicate to Make a Difference: Exploring Cross-Cultural Communication. This course, in three modules, introduces many facets of culture and communication in a real-world public health scenario. Learners must make decisions while discovering communication strategies they can employ in their daily work. The course is designed for public health and other professionals and may be completed at one's own pace within a 30-day period. Completion requires approximately six hours. 2.5 Category 1 credits CME, 2.5 continuing education contact hours for CHES, and 3 contact hours for nurses. For more information go to the Web site: <http://www.nynj-phtc.org/cc/> or call Robyn Shumer at the University of Medicine & Dentistry School of Public Health-Office of Public Health Practice at 732-235-9451 shumerrb@umdnj.edu

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About AoA

AoA works with a nationwide network of organizations and service providers to make support services and resources available to older persons and their caregivers. For more information about AoA, please contact us by mail at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; by phone at (202) 619-0724; by e-mail at aoainfo@aoa.gov; or visit us on the Web at www.aoa.gov.

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